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# THE RAGTIMER

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1977

PUBLISHED BY
THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF CLASSICAL RAGTIME

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FOUNDED 1962
INCORPORATED 1970

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY
INCORPORATED

is a non - profit corporation having the following objects:

To preserve classical ragtime music and to pursue such other activities as shall serve to maintain and develop interest in classical ragtime music and music related thereto.


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## RAGTIME . . .

# UNDER YOUR HAT

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY was founded exactly 15 years ago at Toronto in January of 1962. Over those years we have seen a lot happen to ragtime and all of a positive nature. There has come down from the negro musicians who first uncovered and delineated the mother lode called ragtime, and the white musicians who quickly discovered its importance so many decades ago, a treasure to be preserved and appreciated for years to come. Today you are likely to hear ragtime from the concert stage as frequently, if not more so, as the corner saloon. The Society has endeavoured to make a contribution to the achievement of those ends and desires to continue doing so.

The revered DR. JAMES HUBERT BLAKE is, alone, a living time capsule of the progress of ragtime from its beginnings to the present time. In his youth, Eubie played ragtime "down the line" beginning with the house of Aggie Shelton. As the years went by he put ragtime into the music of his Broadway shows. Nowadays he often performs his beloved ragtime, with enthusiastic acclaim, on a concert stage grand piano at "position one". And what a sight it has been to watch and hear a Eubie Blake performance backed by a symphony orchestra and a distinguished conductor. A warm and hearty Eubie lives on to regale us with his stories of the years between. Indeed he will celebrate his 94th birthday on February 7th. With affection and sincerity we wish Eubie and his dear wife Marion good health and happiness.

On the back cover of THE RAGTIMER for November/December 1972 a copy of the original cover

(continued on page 4)

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for the sheet music of Maple Leaf Rag was reprinted. The back cover of this issue carries a cover reprint of an early edition published by John Stark after he had moved from Sedalia, Missouri to St. Louis.

This issue of THE RAGTIMER will have your membership card for 1977 attached. Please add your signature for validation purposes. The practice of issuing a separate catalogue will be discontinued in the interest of cost reductions. However, our plan is to progressively include all available catalogue items in THE RAGTIMER down through the year commencing with the current issue.

We hear from TREBOR TICHENOR that volume 2 of Dover's Ragtime Rarities should become available this year.

In Canada, The Canadian Brass who have been such a hit at our last two "Ragtime Bashes," have been making successful appearances on national television. They have now been selected as the first Canadian musical ensemble to visit the People's Republic of China. The five-man group, accompanied by their manager, will perform in various cities throughout China from March 10 to 24. The Canadian Brass group was formed in 1970. We wish them an enjoyable tour.

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* ADVANCE NOTICE
*
* THE RAGTIME SOCIETY THIRTEENTH ANNUAL
* BASH - 1977
* IS SCHEDULED AT THE WEEKEND
* OF SATURDAY OCTOBER 15
*
* MARK DOWN THE DATE NOW!
*
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## A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTORS OF THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

There has been a response from the members of our Society quite beyond expectations, in reply to a stated concern about the future. First, it should be said that many members leave no doubt that they want the Society to continue its existence. Secondly, members are clearly beginning to rally behind the call for more members and it is most important that this trend be continued. Perhaps the most heart warming and a very real source of confirmation has been the voluntary contributions received in the form of overpayment in dues to the outright donations received, ranging as high as one hundred dollars. To those who have already responded the board of directors wishes to express a very special "thank you" for the help and the stimulating and inspiring experience it has provided. The cloudy sky is beginning to clear for our future. Thanks as well to those who have advanced helpful views and suggestions. We go forward much encouraged.

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# RECORD REVIEW

by
TEX
WYNDHAM

Eubie Blake Music EBM-7 "Sissle & Blake: Early Rare Recordings, Vol. 2"

Selections and Artists: Baltimore Buzz, Ma, Medley (Oh Me! Oh My!/Say It With Music) - Eubie Blake piano solos; You Ought To Know, I Wonder Where My Sweetie Can Be, Ukelele Baby, Oh Boy! What A Girl!, Ukelele Lullaby - Noble Sissle, vocal, Blake, piano; Jazz Babies' Ball, I'm Just Simply Full Of Jazz, Low Down Blues - Sissle, vocal, with band accompaniment; My Blue Days Blew Over, Medley (Bandana Days/I'm Just Wild About Harry) - orchestral numbers including Blake, piano; Sweet Lady - Irving Kaufman, vocal, Blake, piano; I'm Going Away Just To Wear You Off My Mind - Alberta Hunter, vocal, Blake, piano.

Eubie Blake Music EBM-8 "Eubie Blake And His Proteges Live At The Theatre De Lys"

Selections and Artists: How Could Red Riding Hood?*, Dictys On 7th Avenue, Spanish Venus - Terry Waldo; Snowy Morning Blues, Am I Blue*, If You've Never Been Vamped By A Brown Skin - Mike Lipskin; Medley (Martha My Dear/ Here Comes The Sun), Medley (Liza/Fascinating Rhythm) - Jim Hession; Kitchen Tom, He's A Cousin Of Mine*, That Lindy Hop - Eubie Blake.

*Vocal.

Eubie Blake Music EBM-9 "Eubie Blake Song Hits With Eubie And His Girls"

Personnel: Eubie Blake, piano (a) and vocal (b); Emme Kemp, piano (c) and vocal (d); Mable Lee, vocal (e); Mary Louise, vocal (f).

Selections: If You've Never Been Vamped By A Brown Skin (e, a); Daddy Won't You Please Come Home (f, a); Loving You The Way I Do (b, a); Gee! I Wish I Had Someone To Rock Me In The Cradle Of Love (d, f, a); Strange What Love Will Do (f, a); I'm Craving For That Kind Of Love (e, a); Sweet Talk (f, c); It Ain't Being Done No More (b, d, c); My Handy Man Ain't Handy No More (d, c); Ain't We Got Love (f, a); You Got To Git The Gettin' While The Gettin's Good (e, a); Don't Love Me Blues (b, d, f, c); Roll Jordan (d, c).

Eubie Blake Music EBM-10 "John Arpin - Solo Piano"

Selections: Over The Bars, Memories Of You, Jim Jams, Swampy River, My Pet, Cumberland Stroll, Loose Elbows, Blue Thoughts, Bugle Call Rag, Jade, Ragtime Turtle Dove, Finger Buster.

Available @ $6.95 each postpaid in the U.S. from Eubie Blake Music, 284-A Stuyvesant Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11221. Outside U.S., add $1.75 postage

and handling for either one or two Lps, plus 50¢ each for each Lp over two.

Most readers of this column will want all four of these Lps from Eubie Blake Music. In any event, the quartet covers such a wide area of ragtime interests that, unless you hit on at least one album, you're reading the wrong magazine.

EBM-7 is for historically-minded ragtimers, with most of its material dating from the early twenties and nothing later than 1933. These items, of course, are most desirable, regardless of musical merit or acoustical quality, because they help complete the Blake picture, demonstrating various stages of musical accomplishment of the only major ragtime composer-pianist to survive from the turn of the century into the 1970s with his powers unimpaired. We want to hear "Buzz", for example, not only because it is an impressive technical performance, if a bit heavy on the left hand, but also because it's from Eubie's first session. Similarly, if the only way to hear Eubie playing like crazy behind Alberta Hunter's vocal on "Mind" is to work through this very scratchy copy, well, we'll do it - the twenties aren't coming back to give us another chance to record the session.

Happily, almost everything here is delightful by any standard. "Ma" is a stomping, brilliant solo, filled with dazzling tricks. "Lady" offers a driving accompaniment that supplies all the vitality lacking in the sentimental vocal and shows what Eubie's fertile imagination can get out of a rather pedestrian tune. And who can fail to enjoy Sissle & Blake? An incomparable team - not just a vocalist and accompanist, but equal partners in rousing song after song, Sissle's clear diction and infectious good humor coasting along on Blake's red-hot piano. Real pros.

EBM-8 jumps ahead to March 18, 1974, when Eubie and three of his young pianist-proteges gave a concert at the Theater De Lys in New York City. The album preserves some announcements from each participant, plus a self-accompanied vocal from all but Hession.

The standard set at the keyboard is uniformly high and the contrasting styles make for a listenable program (Waldo - funky, propulsive rhythm; Lipskin - straight-ahead, richly-voiced Harlem stride; Hession - dramatic, rhapsodic and flashy; Blake - full-bodied, nicely-constructed solos blending romantic ideas with hokum-type licks). About half the titles have been recorded by these artists on other discs with the opportunity for polish permitted by a recording studio, but standing alone, EBM-8 is a solid entry and excellent sampler for the ticklers involved.

EBM-9 focuses on Blake as a composer of pop tunes and, though it contains virtually no ragtime, ought to appeal to someone who enjoys a well-crafted, singable melody. Eubie handles the accompaniment on most tracks, and is at the top of his form, enhancing the vocalist's work without intruding on it and strutting out - obviously in high spirits - for brief solo interludes. Miss Kemp takes over the 88 on the others and, surprisingly perhaps, holds her own with a combination of somewhat more updated right-hand figures and light-but-steady-and-rootsy beat.

Eubie is a very appealing singer himself and hits a high spot with his rendition of the plaintive "Loving". Miss Louise has a comfortable delivery and clear, attractive voice which blends well in duets with Miss Kemp's lower-pitched, more intimate timbre.

I do not care much for Miss Lee - her sound is a bit strident and she seems to be working too hard to sell the song - but in "Vamped" and "Craving" she has two of the best-ever Sissle-Blake tunes, and they carry her through. Overall, good numbers seldom heard and well done.

EBM-10 is the first EBM recording on which Eubie does not perform. As anyone who has attended a Society Bash will attest, Eubie could hardly have made a safer bet than to place proceedings in the unbelievably accomplished hands of former Society Chairman John Arpin.

John's gliding touch and seemingly effortless execution might operate to mask the exceptional difficulty of the complex novelty rags so impeccably played at sometimes breathtaking speed. Bargy's "Jim Jams", Confrey's "My Pet", Mayerl's "Loose Elbows" come at you with every note in the dense scores cleanly articulated at a pace that would fatigue a player piano. In between there's more easy-going stuff - a fully-developed version of Eubie's "Memories" that goes from reflective to raggy; John's melodic, loping original "Cumberland"; a bouncy, cheerful romp through Blake's "Bugle". And for opener and closer, two killer-dillers that'll leave you gaping in admiration - James P.'s "Over" and The Lion's "Buster". Unbelievable. (I said that already? Get the record and you'll say it twice too.)

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## RUDI BLESH PERFORMS ANOTHER GREAT SERVICE FOR RAGTIME

Rudi is responsible for bringing together a folio of music devoted to the work of modern composers. This folio is a brand new release which we plan to offer for sale as a member service in the near future. The importance of this contribution to ragtime can be readily appreciated from the following details:

THE RAGTIME CURRENT piano solos by a mainstream of today's Ragtime composers.
SELECTED BY: Rudi Blesh (with descriptive notes).
PUBLISHED BY: Edward B. Marks Music Corp. (Belwin-Mills).
CONTENTS:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| One For Norma | - | Max Morath |
| Astor Place Rag Waltz | - | Donald Ashwander |
| Sweet Sixteenths | - | Wm. Albright |
| The New Black Eagle Buck | - | Max Morath |
| Last Rag | - | Wm. Bolcom |
| Yellow Rose Rag | - | Terry Waldo |
| Amatory Hallucination Rag | - | Milton Kaye |
| Tickled Pink | - | Wm. Rowland |
| The Show-Me-Rag | - | Trebor Jay Tichenor |
| Romantic Rag | - | Kathy Craig |
| Shootin' The Agate | - | Thomas A. Schmutzler |
| Friday Night | - | Donald Ashwander |

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## RAGS TO RICHES - A RAGTIME SPECTACULAR

### Concert Review By Dave Flowitt

The concert took place on October 30th, 1976, in the Dome Auditorium of the C. W. Post Center of Long Island University, Long Island, N. Y. Ragtimer Dave Jasen who is a staff member of the Center, not only organised the gala benefit for the School of the Arts at the Center, but also emceed the event with a rare and commendable minimum of words and thus a maximum of time for the music.

The programme included the complete spectrum of music from early rags, through novelty numbers, stride and boogie-woogie to recent original compositions by some performers. The acoustics were good, though the bass notes of the fine Baldwin Grand at times seemed to almost overpower the treble, nevertheless the musicians enjoyed the deep rich sound of the instrument and this gave the programme a lift from the very start. From a pianist's viewpoint, most interesting was the treatment given well-known compositions by the artists. This was exemplified in the playing of Maple Leaf Rag which was a mandatory inclusion in each performer's selection.

Dave Jasen introduced the programme and became the first performer, setting a brisk pace with MAPLE LEAF RAG, moving to BANTAM STEP, TOO MUCH RASPBERRY and TRIANGLE JAZZ BLUES all played in Dave's fingerbustin' fashion, and concluding with his own RAYMOND'S RAG, which he composed to celebrate the birth of his son in 1966.

Dave then introduced Neville Dickie from England on his first visit to this Continent. "Jet Lag" evidently did not affect Neville's style as he hotted up the pace with an up-tempo MAPLE LEAF RAG complete with key changes and a Stride treatment for openers and followed this with more Stride - KEEP YOUR TEMPER and CAROLINA SHOUT demonstrating clearly a thorough grounding in the idiom. TATTERS (from the idea of Rags and Tatters) - a Dickie original - provided intriguing listening containing as it does vaguely familiar snatches and phrases borrowed from novelty or stride numbers by other composers. Neville concluded his set with CAPRICE RAG at a cracking pace. One can only hope that this will be only the first of a series of visits, as his fast accurate playing is very interesting to listen to, and was much appreciated by the audience.

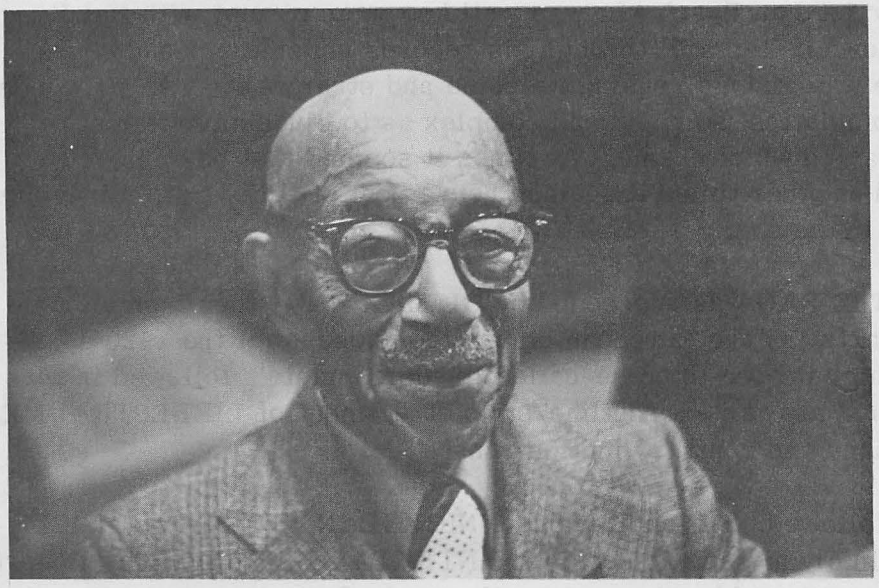
Dick Wellstood, next on the itinerary, after his treatment of MAPLE LEAF RAG continued with a classic version of FIG LEAF RAG and in turn RUSSIAN RAG. Turning to the Stride school, Dick played SNOWY MORNING BLUES and MULE WALK, concluding his segment with a beautiful arrangement of SO IN LOVE (from Kiss Me Kate) played with his distinctive Stride style with the almost percussive left hand, reminiscent in this instance of Donald Lambert's treatment of the classics.

(Continued on page 10)

C. W. POST CENTER CONCERT PICTURES ON OPPOSITE PAGE

Upper, L. to R. - Al Stricker, Trebor Tichenor, David Jasen (host), Neville Dickie & Lou Busch.

Lower L. to R. - Bob Seeley, Dick Wellstood, Neville Dickie, Lou Busch, Dick Hyman, Don Franz, Trebor Tichenor, Al Stricker & host Dave Jasen.



FOND BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO OUR 94 YEAR OLD FRIEND EUBIE BLAKE BORN FEB. 7 1883

Many of the audience had obviously looked forward with decided interest to the appearance of the next artist Lou Busch who was well known as pianist with Hal Kemp and his Orchestra but known better still through his records under the pseudonym "Joe Fingers Carr". He was given a rousing welcome and straight away he proceeded to provide an earful of 'pianistics' so rapid and complex as to elude any attempt to follow which hand was playing which theme. At times it seemed that he achieved three themes at once and at other times it seemed he was out of time, yet, miraculously it all came out perfectly in the end.

BLACK AND WHITE RAG was succeeded by CLIMAX RAG, then a small demonstration (using 'charts') of the European classic composers' of the 1920's conception of Ragtime which proved to be so-called 'modern music', followed in turn by the Ragtime Composers' answer - a ragtime/stride treatment of LIEBESTRAUME complete still with cadenzas and contrary motion runs.

The other items followed, fast and furious - NICKEL IN THE SLOT, MAPLE LEAF RAG, NOLA and finally a masterpiece THE ENTERTAINERS' RAG (Jay Roberts) at an incredible speed but without blurring and for those who know the musical score, sheer delight to listen to the really neat 'modifications' to the written version. The concept that "seeing is believing" no longer held good and the listener by closing his or her eyes could readily believe that what one was hearing was really a heavily doctored piano-roll played at high speed.

After a short interval Dick Hyman took the stand, commencing with a fabulous stride treatment of MAPLE LEAF RAG, followed by Jas. P. Johnson's ECCENTRICITY waltz, Jelly Roll Morton's SHREVEPORT STOMP played with impeccable taste and almost effortlessly, these versions refreshingly different to those on the two L. P.'s Dick recorded recently.

SOLACE was almost rhapsodic, possibly influenced by his recent involvement in the upcoming N. B. C. TV film "Scott Joplin, King of Ragtime". The remaining items of his selection were - YOU'VE GOT TO BE MODERNISTIC, FINGERBUSTER (W. L. Smith), FROGGIE MORE, and again FINGERBUSTER, this time the J. R. Morton composition.

Dick Hyman seems to have mastered the unique ability to get right inside the composers' style, absorb the idiom completely and thereafter extemporise ad-lib in the same vein seemingly without effort. The rendition sometimes seems to be almost an improvement on the composer's original recording.

At this point with the senses reeling from listening to the aforementioned piano work, the appearance of the St. Louis Ragtimers came almost as a relief and indeed as a complete change of pace. The New York audience were soon tapping their toes to the romping stomping ragtime of RED ROSE RAG, MAPLE LEAF RAG, BUCKSNORT RAG, DOWN IN HONKY TONK TOWN, NAKED DANCE and finally I LOVE TO GO SWIMMIN' WITH WIMMEN, this being well received indeed.

Show stopper Bob Seeley was the final artist on the programme. To those readers fortunate to have heard Bob at the recent Bash in Toronto, further comment on his style is superfluous, but for the benefit of other readers, Bob played with complete

mastery the physically exhausting boogie-woogie and stride numbers CHICAGO FLYER, MAPLE LEAF RAG, YANCEE SPECIAL, HANDFUL OF KEYS and the superb ST. LOUIS BLUES complete with double tempo finish.

This show is easily worthy of an extended world tour, each artist having such an individual style and repertoire. A live concert such as this one cannot be replaced by or compared with a long playing record.

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## THE TRANSITION FROM RAGTIME TO IMPROVISED PIANO STYLE

by Eli H. Newberger

(Ed. Comment: This article by SOCIETY member Eli Newberger (see Something Doing) was published in The Journal Of Jazz Studies in the Spring of 1976. A reprint can be obtained directly from E. H. Newberger, 92 Evans Rd., Brookline, Mass. 02146, U. S. A. for $1. 75. The following is a selected excerpt, which may whet your appetite).

"Ragtime differs from jazz. True ragtime, in essence, is notated piano music intended to be performed as written. Therefore the musical conception is to a great degree expressed in terms of a given invariant composition rather than, as became the case in jazz, freely improvised choruses on a chord scheme.

As the name implies, ragtime consists of musical "scraps": a series of three to five melodic strains over a more or less regular "oom-pah" bass make up the usual ragtime piece.

Most of the authentic ragtime literature was written between 1895 and 1915. It consists on the one hand of synthetic potpourris of "coon songs," "plantation dances," marches, cakewalks, and "characteristic two-steps", and on the other of thorough-composed piano pieces of more serious musical intent. Brainard's Ragtime Collection contains 24 piano solos of the first type only, including "Rastus Johnson's Cakewalk," "Piccaninny Rag (Shake Yo' Dusters)," and "Dusky Doings in Darktown"; the only protojazz elements in this folio are a regular left hand and occasional syncopations.

Those ragtime pieces that are indeed forerunners of jazz, and in particular of the jazz piano, are of the second type. They were composed mainly by blacks. The more visceral quality of these rags can be attributed to the source and inspiration of the "scraps," that is, to the black spiritual and folk song tradition rather than the more sentimental mainstream of 19th century American popular music. This manifestly important distinction between the sources of what are really two "ragtimes" has, I believe, been unfortunately overlooked by writers in the field.

The metamorphosis to jazz was gradual. In the hands of some ragtime composers and performers, ragtime pieces, or choruses from them, became platforms for improvisation. Concepts of rhythm, and subsequently of notation, underwent remarkable

and lasting changes. In the musical examples that appear on the following pages, these changes are documented.

Among the great ragtime composers were Scott Joplin, Joseph Lamb, James Scott, Tony Jackson, Benjamin Harney, and Artie Matthews. The main transition figures were Jelly Roll Morton, Eubie Blake, James P. Johnson, and Luckey Roberts.

Our examples comprise seven different interpretations of the 16-measure second strain from "Maple Leaf Rag." Two of these, the Brun Campbell performance and the one by Joplin himself, are representative of "authentic" ragtime playing. In these performances, certain deviations from the original published manuscript appear, but these scarcely rank as improvisations. On the other hand, the solos of Jelly Roll Morton (both the so-called "St. Louis" and "Correct" versions from his Libary of Congress sessions), and those of Eubie Blake, James P. Johnson, and Willie "The Lion" Smith, show definite jazz characteristics in their more substantial departures from the actual text."

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## RAGTIME FLOURISHES IN ENGLAND

(Ed. Comment: The Department of Music, University of Keele, Staffordshire, England, ST5 5BG is headed by pianist Professor Peter Dickinson. Last March he played a program of ragtime piano at the University Moberly Hall which included music of such composers as Joplin, Lamb, Scott, Debussy (Golliwog's Cake Walk), Stravinsky (Piano Rag Music), Milhaud (Three Rag Caprices), J. P. Johnson, Satie (Le Piccadilly) and Artie Matthews. The following describes some of the activities and plans.)

"The University of Keele has the largest Department of American Studies in Britain and one of the principal concentrations of American specialists in Europe. The David Bruce Centre was formed by Professor David Adams in 1969 to encourage postgraduate teaching and research. With the establishment in 1974 of a Music Department, with Peter Dickinson as Professor and Head of Department, the literary and historical aspects of American Studies are now complemented with a programme in Music.

American Music has always lacked a focus in England which could be used to stimulate performances and increase knowledge and understanding at many levels. A university can best fulfil this role. The choice of Keele is justified by its vigorous tradition of American Studies, confirmed by the popularity of the subject and the appointment of Arnold Goldman to the second Chair.

The Music Department has close links with American Studies. At an undergraduate level the programme in American Music, through the breadth of musical styles represented, would provide a flavour not specifically available at other universities: and Music can be studied with American Studies for the joint degree. For postgraduates a one-year MA is proposed in American Music and this would also

be relevant to the similar courses planned in Electronic and Avant Garde music, apart from more historical studies in the field, and independent research.

Keele is close to Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham and only two hours by train from London.

Eventually it is hoped to provide an information service for American Music here and British Music in the U.S.A., linked to professional organisations on both sides of the Atlantic."

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BOOK REVIEW

By Hank Troy

(Ed. Comment: Hank Troy is a SOCIETY member who plays piano in Denver, Col. He has a special interest in classical ragtime. Also he plays accompaniment for silent films. The following is his review as published November 28, 1976 by Rocky Mountain News "Now".)

"THIS IS RAGTIME by TERRY WALDO (See Capsule Information Releases for details).

It seems like only yesterday that you couldn't turn on the radio or television, or walk into a restaurant with a juke box or ride in an elevator or stroll down the street and pass someone whistling - without hearing Scott Joplin's "The Entertainer" (theme music from "The Sting").

The ragtime fad appears to have come and gone. But, happily, not without leaving in its wake music lovers who have embraced this American musical form and rediscovered the delightful syncopations that had toes tapping all over the country at the turn of the century.

Where did ragtime come from, and what happened to it during the period from World War I to the present? Pianist and composer Terry Waldo answers these questions in "This is Ragtime," the latest of several books on the subject. With an attention to historical detail as background, he traces the development of ragtime from its roots in slave songs, through the period of the revivalistic "Great Awakening" of the 1780s, through the Civil War and Jim Crow reconstruction days and into the 20th century.

He then discusses not only the development of classic ragtime as written by Joplin, James Scott and Joseph F. Lamb, but also Tin Pan Alley's commercialization of the form, the birth of the blues, stride piano and jazz. Describing ragtime's relationship to all these, he chronicles its transformations through the '40s, '50s and '60s to its re-emergence in the ragtime boom of the '70s.

Waldo has an easy, folksy style which makes for comfortable reading. He has researched his subject thoroughly but has avoided pedantically filling the pages with endless lists of composers and compositions. Writing only about the most notable practitioners of ragtime in any given period, he captures the flavor of the times and gives the reader just enough hard facts to support his observations.

Adding authenticity to Waldo's findings and helping to spice up the narrative are numerous interviews and quotes from musicians like Irving Berlin, Lu Watters, Eubie Blake, Joshua Rifkin, Denver-area favorites Johnny Maddox and Ralph Sutton, Colorado-born Max Morath, and author Rudi Blesh, who, with Harriet Janis, wrote the ragtime bible "They All Played Ragtime" (1950).

Lists of books, records and magazine articles direct the reader to ample new territory for further study. And among his tributes to those who have kept ragtime alive, Waldo includes ragtime clubs (with addresses) which one can join to keep abreast of the latest developments in the field. Pianists especially will be amused by the dialogue on styles of playing ragtime in the last chapter - and will enjoy trying out the never-before published "Little Jack's Rag" by Arthur Marshall, one of Joplin's proteges.

This book is a competent, affectionate chronology of ragtime - a comprehensible introduction for newcomers and a good overview with new insights for old-time ragtimers."

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## CHICAGO HAD ITS RAGTIME DAYS

(Ed. Comment: The following is taken from an article by ONAH L. SPENCER in The DOWNBEAT Magazine (Chicago, July 15, 1945) under the title "Ragtime Aided Advent Of Syncopated Music". We are indebted to a SOCIETY member for bringing this "Chicago scene" story of ragtime to our attention.)

"Ragtime played a major part in making the Windy City a haven for modern music, because its syncopated variations on a theme set the stage for jazz, which evolved into swing. Ragtime is the "missing link" between the "blues" of the plantation negroes and the improvisation of Chicago jazz immortals.

After the Civil War, the negro's attempt to become carefree and happy in his new freedom resulted in ragtime, a gayer and more impulsive music than the blues. Ragtime's chief characteristic was rhythm in a new and unique grouping of both words and melody. Its faster rhythm caused the body to move automatically with the music, arousing emotions of joy.

In his book, Rolling Along with Song, J. Rosamond Johnson, describes the reaction to ragtime thus, "As restless as a rolling stone, the Negro reeled and rocked from one end of the keyboard to the other, inserting new idioms as the dancers rolled along. When there were no dancers to fill in the 'waits,' the player inserted a break filling in the gaps with an occasional glissando. Soon he found himself rolling along in a new style of playing."

Errant pianists, who cultivated ragtime in the nineties, found a ready audience in many of Chicago's south side saloons. Percy Wenrich, white composer of The Old Gray Bonnet and Just Because I'm From Missouri, was a barroom troubadour on Wabash near 21st Street. Fred Fisher, later a publisher, started as a ragtime pianist here. Glover Compton, whose Monkey Rag and Vegetable Blues were first heard in south side taverns, later became a European music hall sensation. His greatest hit was Canadian Capers.

Arthur Shaw, a graduate of Armour Tech Mandolin Club, composed his first rag, That High Brown Gal of Mine, in Chicago. Another hit, This Loving Gag Ain't Goin' Ta Pay Expenses, Babe, was written by Shaw and Dixon in 1905 and introduced in Chicago. Tony Jackson, who played at the Elite Cage, 3030 S. State Street, authored Pretty Baby, featured in the film, The Life of Vernon Castle.

Shelton Brooks, composer of Some of These Days, received impetus to fame with his early ragtime tunes. Other Brooks' tunes, Dark Town Strutters' Ball and Walkin' The Dog, were heavily plugged at the Pekin theater, Chicago's first big Negro theater. At Pony Moore's, 22nd and S. Dearborn, the transition from ragtime to jazz was clearly illustrated by a band, including Freddie Birch, piano; Charlie "Doolie" Alexander, banjo; and Charlie Elgar, violin. Most popular ragtime entertainers at the time were Nelson and Tommy Watson, a vocal duo.

In 1910, the police closed down many of the clubs which featured ragtime. With the decline of the Pekin theater, "Ma" Rainey popularized the blues and Wilbur Sweatman featured jazz at the Grand Theater's opening. Clear-cut ragtime was passe.

However, ragtime, which preceded the new music, mingled with many of the new jazz forms and it was 1920 before it had completely faded from sight. Its characteristics are still found today in much modern music, and ragtime tunes are continually featured by popular musicians."

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# LETTERS

Letters are welcome from members. Excerpts believed to be of general interest are passed along in this section of THE RAGTIMER.

(Ed. Comment: Dr. Fliedner continues to spread the gospel of ragtime in the course of his travels. The following is taken from a recent letter.)

I am continuing my efforts to foster an increasing interest in Ragtime. During the month of May, on a tour of the Middle East, I carried with me some copies of classical ragtime pieces which I gave to hotel pianists.

In appreciation of my gift, the dining room pianist at the Jerusalem Hilton invited me to play. I readily accepted, and played themes from GRACE AND BEAUTY, RAGTIME BOBOLINK and THE STING. This gave the diners an opportunity to hear compositions of three of our best known composers, Scott, Lamb and Joplin, which

they enjoyed hearing.

- Leonard J. Fliedner, Flushing, N. Y., U. S. A.

* * *

Michael Robinson,
812 Oakland Ave., Apt. 207
Urbana, Ill. 61801, U. S. A.

- Would like to hear from any member in the Urbana-Champaign region.

* * *

Al Wayner,
4827 Willett Parkway, Apt. 22
Chevy Chase, Md. 20015, U. S. A.

- Wishes to locate early editions of "They All Played Ragtime" by Rudi Blesh and Harriet Janis.

* * *

G. G. Cayugan,
11627 Highland Drive
Warren, Mich. 48089, U. S. A.

- Has old records for sale. Also wishes to trade sheet music.

* * *

Howard J. Angel,
9423 Organdy
Portage, Mich. 49081, U. S. A.

- Wishes to know if there is a member, who taped the bash last October, who is willing to sell or trade cassette tapes.

* * *

Robert Mason,
62 Russell St.
Dunedin, Otago, New Zealand

- Would like to hear from and have correspondence with fellow ragtimers interested in the banjo.

* * *

Morten Gunnar Larsen,
Blasbortvn 1-B
Oslo 8, Norway

- Would like to obtain a copy of the music for James Scott's "Princess Rag" - can one of our members help him out?

* * *

Richard L. Laniewski,
3078 Valley Meadow Dr., Apt. 116W
Dallas, Texas 75220, U. S. A.

- Would like to hear from other ragtimers in his area.

* * *

A new act called Raspillaire and Gish bill themselves as neo-vaudeville entertainment. Performing music from the turn of the century with assorted original

material, they are on stage six nights a week. They have been appearing at the Great Smokies Hilton in Asheville, N. C. and then go south to Orlando, Florida for the winter.

Their repertoire is varied with rags, blues and their own original material. Some of the blues are "Stingaree Blues" and "St. Louis Blues" by W. C. Handy. Their rags include "The Cascades", "Pineapple Rag", "Temptation" and "Dill Pickles." They also invite audience participation with the use of spoons and kazoos on such numbers as "You're a Grand Old Flag", "Stars And Stripes" and "Temptation."

Nellie Raspillaire sings, tap dances, plays the guitar, mandolin and recorder. Orson Gish accompanies on the piano and sometimes the guitar, banjo or harmonica. Their show is well paced and the various instrumental colors enhances the show. It is good family entertainment.

Their original material includes such songs as "Pity the Mother", "Doorbell Messiah", and an especially fine birthday song called "Magic Number."

Nellie has a beautiful light soprano voice that is strong and clear and she projects it as well as her charm. Orson's sense of humor is on the droll side and the two together complement each other. They have been together for a couple of years. May they have many more together and charm audiences wherever they appear.

- Charles Davis (The Tarheel Tickler)

(Ed. Comment: Charles has indicated he is always glad to correspond with fellow ragtimers. His address is P. O. Box 1572, 2825 Lexington Rd., Louisville, Ky. 40206, U. S. A.).

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CAPSULE

INFORMATION

RELEASES ---------- FOR HAPPY HUNTING

NOTE: We often receive information from members and other sources which can be passed along in brief form as items of possible general interest. CAPSULE INFORMATION RELEASES do not refer to items or material which can be obtained from the SOCIETY. Further, we do not guarantee the accuracy of the information given. Under the conditions stated, we are able to publicize a broader coverage of promising information coming to our attention.

Book - PIANO SERVICING, TUNING & REBUILDING by Arthur A. Reblitz - 174 pages on heavy slick paper for hundreds of detailed illustrations. A bible for the student and professional alike. Recommended by SOCIETY member Harvey Roehl. Available from The Vestal Press, P. O. Box 97, Vestal, N. Y. 13850, U. S. A. (U. S. Price $15. 00).

Book - THIS IS RAGTIME by Terry Waldo with foreword by Eubie

Blake. Covers ragtime from its roots to the 1970s. Salty reading but thoroughly enjoyable in hands of Terry Waldo. 256 pages, 48 photos, 8 line drawings, U.S. price $10.95, Hawthorn Books, Inc., 260 Madison Avenue, New York City, N.Y. 10016, U.S.A. (See review reprint in this issue of THE RAGTIMER).

Publication - THE MISSISSIPPI RAG - devoted to Traditional Jazz and Ragtime in America. Subscription is $5.00 (U.S.) per year. Address is Mississippi Rag, P.O. Box 19068, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55419, U.S.A.

L. P. Record - RAGTIME ENSEMBLE - Queen City Jazz Band of Denver HHZ.99 Stereo includes Polyragmic, Heliotrope, Bethena, Rosebud, Cottontail, Weeping Willow, Ragtime Dance. Available postpaid at $7.50 (U.S.) from H. H. Zeno Productions, P.O. Box 1273, Littleton, Colorado, 80120, U.S.A.

Books - POPULAR MUSIC PERIODICALS INDEX

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1973 | 338 pages | $11.50 (U.S.) |
| 1974 | 413 pages | $15.00 (U.S.) |
| 1975 | 376 pages | $15.00 (U.S.) |

ANNUAL INDEX TO POPULAR MUSIC RECORD REVIEWS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1972 | 467 pages | $13.50 (U.S.) |
| 1973 | 681 pages | $20.00 (U.S.) |
| 1974 | 597 pages | $20.00 (U.S.) |
| 1975 | 552 pages | $20.00 (U.S.) |

Compiled by Canadians Andrew D. Armitage of Owen Sound and Dean Tudor of Toronto - a must for collectors and music libraries. Available from Scarecrow Press, Inc., P.O. Box 656, Metuchen, N.J. 08840, U.S.A.

L. P. Record - THE RED ONION JAZZ BAND with NATALIE LAMB: MANASSAS 1973. FAT CAT'S JAZZ, FCJ 157. Recorded live at 1973 Manassas Jazz Festival. Tex Wyndham wrote the liner notes and is at the piano on 8 of the 12 tracks. Available from Fat Cat's Jazz Records, P.O. Box 458, Manassas, Virginia 22110, U.S.A. (U.S. price $6.98 postpaid).

L. P. Record - BELGIAN RAGTIME, Marc Heronet, Alain Lesire and Andre Van Lint - EMI-4C054. Contains 14 tracks of period to contemporary ragtime by three Belgian pianists - an unusual source for ragtime. Information can be obtained from Marc Heronet, 9 Av. Vandromme, 1160 Brussels, Belgium for ordering purposes.

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PERFORMERS: Please keep us posted on your whereabouts and your schedule will appear in this column.

# SOMETHING DOING...

JOHN ARPIN - at the Chelsea Inn, 33 Gerrard St. W., Toronto - in "The Piano Bar" Mon. to Fri. 5:00 p. m. to 8:00 p. m. and with his trio in "The Chelsea Bun" Lounge Mon. to Sat. 9:00 p. m. to 1:00 a. m.

EUBIE BLAKE - The DEAN of RAGTIME - This popular recording artist and composer performs frequently at Concerts and Festivals. Does guest appearances on T. V. talk shows and is often to be heard on radio programs (watch your local press music programs for dates).

STEEN CHRISTENSEN - at the Mechanical Music Museum (MMM), Vesterbrogade 150, Copenhagen (Denmark), every 2nd & 4th Wednesday each month.

PETER FAHRENHOLTZ - plays solo ragtime piano and with bands - regularly on tour in Denmark.

DAVE FLOWITT - at Brunswick Hotel, Brunswick Street, Toronto with Dr. McJazz Band, Thursday through Saturday, 9:00 p. m. to 1:00 a. m.

"GASLIGHT" GALE FOEHNER - at the Red Creek, 800 Jefferson Rd., Rochester, N. Y. - with his "Scott Joplin and Others Still Live" Show every Saturday 4:30 p. m. to 7:30 p. m.

RALPH GRUGEL - and The Eagle Jazz Band at East Shore Club, Lakeshore Drive, Cleveland, Ohio, Fri. and Sat.

JOHN HASSE - at The Ordinary, Nashville, Indiana, Fri. and Sat. nights.

TOM JONES - Ragtime Pianist is doing regular playing dates in the Cincinnati, Ohio, area.

JIM KAPLAN - at the Pizza-Stein, 1428 W. Galena Ave., Freeport, Illinois on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays.

JOHN MADDOX - Regularly appearing in Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, Washington and Virginia. (Watch your local news).

KEN MAYHERCY - (RAGTIME $ BILL) - appearing regularly at Colorado resort areas.

GLENN MEYER - and his band at St. Louis, Mo., making regular appearances.

BOB MILNE - at Charley's Crab Rest., Troy, Mich. I75 at Crook's Rd. Exit. (Alternates with Bob Seeley) 4:00 p. m. to 12:00 p. m. Mon. to Fri., 8 to 12 Sat., 5 to 9 Sun.

MIKE MONTGOMERY - at The Dakota Inn, Rathskeller, John R. Road north of McNichols, Detroit, Michigan, Friday nights.

MAX MORATH - on the road with his show "The Ragtime Years".

DR. ELI NEWBERGER - and The New Black Eagle Jazz Band at the Stickey Wicket Pub, West Main Street, Hopkinton , Mass., Thursday 8:00 p. m. to 12:00 p. m. (Pianist is Bob Pilsbury).

TOM NOEL - on the road with his living portrayal shows "Mark Twain at Home", and "Mr. Jelly Lord" based on the life of Jelly Roll Morton.

CHARLIE RASCH - with SISTER KATE, at the Cow Palace, Bancroft Road about 8 miles west of Toledo, Ohio, Fridays and Saturdays 9:00 p. m. on.

SI. RICHARDS - at Sheldon Inn, 6611 Eastland Rd., Middleburgh Heights, Ohio (5 min. south of Cleveland Hopkins Airport). Tues. thru Sat. 6:00 p. m. to 10:00 p. m.

HANK ROSS - with Red Onion Jazz Band, at O'Connor's Beef'n Ale House, 708 Mountain Blvd., Watchung, N. J. Friday nights at 7:30 p. m. on.

TOM SCHMUTZLER - with banjoist Harry Malfas, the Hardware City Temperance & Ragtime Society at the One Way Fare, Simsbury, Ct. Sun. nights. Also touring schools in southern New England with his own presentation "Our Ragtime Heritage".

BOB SEELEY - at Charley's Crab Rest., Troy, Mich. I75 at Crook's Rd. Exit. (Alternates with Bob Milne) 4:00 p. m. to 12:00 p. m. Mon. to Fri., 8 to 12 Sat., 5 to 9 Sun.

RICHARD SKRIKA - at the piano with the Eric Mannering New Imperial Jazz Band - Lee's Imperial Tavern, Riverside Drive, Windsor, Ontario, every Sat. 4:00 to 7:00 p. m.

DAN SUMMERS - and New Charleston Chasers regularly appearing in the Buffalo area.

TREBOR TICHENOR - on The Goldenrod Showboat, at St. Louis, Missouri. Does weekly radio show on KWMU - FM 90. 7 called "RAGOPHILE with Trebor Tichenor," Fridays at 6:00 p. m.

GERALD TRAUNIG - playing at Fiorello's Restaurant in West Hartford, Conn.

TERRY WALDO - has weekly half hour radio show "THIS IS RAGTIME" on National Public Radio - Check your local listing.

TEX WYNDHAM - and The Red Lion Jazz Band in the Green Room at the Hotel duPont, 11th & Market Sts., Wilmington, Del. 1st Fri. each month, 8 to 12, A/C 302-656-8121.

BILL ZINN - and Zinn's Ragtime String Quartet doing Concerts and College dates in the New York area.

## MATERIAL AVAILABLE FROM THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

(Continued from Page 2)

| TITLE | ORDERING NUMBER |
|---|---|
| Colonial Glide (P. Pratt) | SR-064 |
| Coney Island Dip, The-March-Two-Step (A. J. Resseque) | SR-168 |
| Cotton Patch, A (Chas. A. Tyler) | SR-181 |
| Cotton Pickers Rag (Harry O. Sutton) | SR-100 |
| Crash! "Some Rag" (Van & Schenck) | SR-147 |
| Darkey Tickle, The (E. B. Hunt) | SR-093 |
| Dixie Dimples (Scott) | SR-050 |
| Dixie Flyer Cakewalk-Two Step (A. E. Henrich) | SR-164 |
| Dusty Rag (Aufderheide) | SR-027 |
| Easy Winners, The (Joplin) | SR-013 |
| Elite Syncopations (Joplin) | SR-014 |
| Encore Rag (Tad Fischer) | SR-175 |
| Entertainer's Rag, The (Jay Roberts) | SR-091 |
| Entertainer, The (Joplin) | SR-015 |
| Father Knickerbocker Rag (Edwin E. Wilson) | SR-144 |
| Florida Rag (Lowry) | SR-023 |
| For Aunt Clorinda's Cake (Jos. D. & Kelso Murdock) | SR-094 |
| Fred Heltman's Rag (Fred Heltman) | SR-114 |
| French Pastry Rag (Lee Copeland) | SR-146 |
| Frog Legs Rag (Scott) | SR-019 |
| Fun-Bob (Wenrich) | SR-069 |
| Georgia Rag, The (A. Gumble) | SR-074 |
| Golden Spider Rag (Chas. L. Johnson) | SR-148 |
| Halley's Comet (H. J. L. Lincoln) | SR-067 |
| Harlem Rag (Turpin) (Cover Reproduced) | SR-011 |
| Heliotrope Bouguet (Joplin-Chauvin) | SR-018 |
| Hifalutin Rag (Lodge) | SR-068 |
| Honeymoon Rag (Scott) | SR-020 |
| Honeysuckle Rag (George Botsford) | SR-136 |
| Horseshoe Rag (Julia Lee Niebergall) | SR-118 |
| Humpty Dumpty (C. Straight) | SR-084 |
| Jamaica Jinjer Rag (Egbert VanAlstyne) | SR-157 |
| Just Laughin' (A. E. Henrich) | SR-097 |
| Kansas City Rag (Scott) (Cover Reproduced) | SR-006 |
| King Chanticleer (Ayer) | SR-047 |
| Kissing Bug Rag (C. L. Johnson) | SR-077 |
| Knick Knocks Rag (Phil Schwartz) | SR-149 |
| Kyrene (E. J. Stark) | SR-079 |
| Lazy Luke (Geo. J. Philpot) | SR-122 |
| Lemon Drops - A Rag (Bernard) | SR-025 |
| Leola Two-Step (Joplin) | SR-026 |
| Les Copeland's 38th Street Rag (Les Copeland) | SR-151 |
| Let's Dance Rag (Wally Herzer) | SR-158 |
| Lily Rag, The (Charles Thompson) | SR-108 |
| Lion Tamer Rag, The (M. Janza) | SR-083 |
| Live Wires Rag (Shepherd) (Cover Reproduced) | SR-009 |

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